MEDITATION LEAFLETS

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MEDITATION LEAFLETS.

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MEDITATION LEAFLETS.

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THE leaflets are intended to suggest thoughts for meditation, in or out of retreat, on the lines of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

There are also sets of detached leaflets, which he who directs a retreat may leave with the exercitant, to remind him of the points given, or which he can distribute for a like purpose to the members of a Community, whether these be Religious or Sodalists or Scholars.

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PRELIMINARY MEDITATION.

I. *Ends we ought to have in view.*

1. The correction of faults, especially of one fault.
2. Reform of our dispositions and inclinations.
3. Spiritual renewal.
4. Clearness and solidity of principles.
5. Fresh encouragement to progress and sanctity, by renewing and deepening our motives of fear, hope, gratitude, and especially of love.

II. *Dispositions we ought to cherish.*

1. Simplicity and sincerity of heart.
2. Generosity towards God.
3. Courage and confidence in God.
4. Determination to do our best.

III. *Means to secure the success of the retreat.*

1. Attention to our meditations.
2. Observance of the additions: especially of silence, recollection, and punctuality.
3. Prayer especially to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Ignatius, our Guardian Angel, and our special patrons.
4. Recourse, when we think it necessary or useful, to our confessor or director.

THE END OF MAN. (*a*) IN TIME.

THE SERVICE OF GOD.

I. *The nature of the service.*

1. Man is *created* by God.
2. God has given an end to man.
3. He has placed man on this earth for a period of probation, to merit eternal, supernatural, divine happiness by the homage of
   - *a. praise:* man has a visible existence; he is the high priest of the creation; he has to show outward honour and reverence to God, and so to give Him praise;
   - *b. reverence:* man has an intellect; he must acknowledge God, and cherish inward reverence;
   - *c. service:* man has a will; he has to do the will of God; he has to serve Him.
4. Man is a person; the service he renders to God must be a personal service; man must deal with God as a person with a person, and must render Him a free, willing service of love.

II. *The motives of this service.*

1. It is a matter of justice: God made us; we belong to Him.

2. It is a matter of duty: God is our sovereign Lord.
3. It is a matter of honour: God is our loving Father; we owe Him love and gratitude.
4. It is a matter of necessity: if we wish to satisfy the craving of the intellect after truth, of the will for what is good, of our very nature after happiness, we must serve God. Our very nature demands it; we can find no satisfaction except in God and His service.

III. *The conditions of this service.*

1. The powers we have wherewith to serve God: the will, the mind, the body; divine grace.
2. The difficulties we have in God's service: they are mainly the inclinations and frailties of our fallen nature.
3. The demands God makes on us: these demands are easy: He wants an earnest good-will. He does not look to what we do, but to what we *sincerely try* to do: to try is to succeed in God's service.

THE END OF MAN. (*b*) IN ETERNITY.

I. *We are made for an eternal happiness.*
   1. The nature of this happiness.
      We shall see, possess, and enjoy God;
      and this, as He enjoys Himself;
      and we shall enjoy Him by right of a reward.
   2. The eternity of this happiness: it is without end, without break; without diminution, enjoyed in perfect security.

II. *We have an alternative before us.*
   1. We are free; we are made to merit happiness, consequently we are left at liberty to serve God or not to serve Him.
   2. Once in Heaven, we shall enjoy it for all eternity.
   3. Were we to lose Heaven, it would be lost for ever.
   4. We cannot return to nothing; we must go on towards eternity; we shall exist for ever, and be either unspeakably happy or unspeakably unhappy for all eternity.

III. *The choice depends on ourselves.*
   1. We need God's grace; but we can rely on receiving all necessary graces.
   2. Hence it depends on us whether we shall be happy or unhappy for ever, as also what degree of happiness we shall obtain.

3. How great a thought is this, that we have it thus in our power to obtain eternal happiness, and to obtain a very high degree of happiness, if we only try!
4. But try we must. What is my resolution? What efforts do I make?

THE END AND USE OF CREATURES.

I. *The end of creatures.*

1. All other creatures are created for the sake of man. (Genesis i. 29; ix. 2, 3.) Whatever God does, He does for an end. He could not make insensible creatures for themselves, nor directly for His own use: He does not need them; they can be of absolutely no use to Him. Man is the only being to whom they are and can be of use: God must have intended them for man.
2. If God created them for man, He made them with a view to man's own destiny: He made them to be of help to man in the attainment of his end.
3. This is their object, and they serve no other really useful purpose to man.

II. *The use of creatures.* Hence it follows:

1. That we should make use of them as far as they help us to attain our end.
2. That we should shun them as far as they withdraw us from our end and hinder us in God's service.
3. Some things, such as food and clothing, are necessary and useful; others are less so; certain things are hindrances in a greater

or lesser degree, always or at times. Some things are necessary or useful to a certain degree, but become a hindrance beyond that (*e.g.*, extravagance in dress, gluttony, &c.). We should use each thing or abstain from it, in proportion.

III. *Indifference to creatures.*

1. Creatures have no value except in so far as they help us to serve God. Hence,
2. We should strive not to like and esteem them for their own sake;
3. but to make ourselves indifferent to them, except in so far as they are a help or a hindrance to us in the service of God.
4. In ordinary life, this principle is often naturally acted upon: a cabman is indifferent to the road he is told to take; a workman is indifferent to his tools on Sunday, &c.

THE THREE-FOLD SIN.

I. *The sin of the angels.*

1. The angels were created pure spirits, free, in the fulness of natural intellectual intelligence, and in the state of grace.
2. They were destined for eternal happiness, and could easily obtain it.
3. Some of them committed sin; they derived no advantage from it; they lost grace and Heaven, and were hurled into the eternal torments of Hell.
4. The sin was committed in a moment; it was a sin of thought; an unrepented sin; and was punished with eternal damnation.
5. God, who punished these angels thus, is infinitely just; hence the punishment is not too severe; what a monstrous evil, then, must sin be!

II. *The sin of our first parents.*

1. They were created in innocence, grace, and happiness, with an eternal happiness before them.
2. They sinned—lost grace and happiness, and became with all their posterity liable to sickness, misery, and death.
3. God, in His infinite justice, did not punish them too severely.

4. Far from punishing them to the full measure of justice, He dealt with them in mercy. What an evil must sin be!

III. *The sin of one who dies in his first mortal sin.*

1. If any person committed one mortal sin and died in it, he would be condemned to eternal torments.
2. Yet this punishment would be just, it would not be too great: what a dreadful evil must sin be!
3. If we committed one mortal sin, we deserved to be punished for ever in Hell. But
4. God punished our sins in His Son on the Cross! that we might repent and obtain pardon.
5. Let us throw ourselves on the mercy of the Divine Redeemer, with sentiments of humble repentance and gratitude.

OUR OWN SINS.

I. Short and general recollection of the sins of our life.

II. *The evil of mortal sin.*

1. *In the face of God:*
   it is rebellion against God's sovereignty,
   it is an offence against God's holiness,
   it is an outrage against God's love.
2. *In the face of the universe:*
   a. God established a wise moral order to ensure the well-being and happiness of all His creatures. Sin is an attempt against this moral order, so necessary to safeguard the welfare of all men.
   b. It is fraught with harm: witness the sin of the angels, of our first parents, and of many men.
   c. It spoils and stains one of the brightest works in creation: the human soul.
3. *In the soul:*
   it steeps the living soul in spiritual death.
   it makes the soul an outcast,
   it degrades the soul into a useless drudge.

III. Who am I—compared to all men, angels, God? How weak, miserable, helpless am I!

IV. Who is God?—His power, wisdom, holiness, perfection—and I, a worm of the dust, dare to rise against Him.

V. Wonderful, that the creatures have not risen against me! In spite of my sins, the angels protect me, the saints pray for me, all creatures are at my service. Gratitude for God's mercy and confidence in God.

HELL.

I. *The sufferings of the body.*

1. Imagine countless living bodies entombed in eternal darkness.
2. Imagine that you hear the wailing and groans of despair and the wild blasphemies and curses of the damned.
3. Imagine the loathsome smell of smoke, of sulphur, and of the hideous mass of moral wickedness and degradation.
4. Imagine the bitterness of the tears, misery, sadness, disappointment, remorse, and despair.
5. Imagine the burning heat of the unquenchable fire, in which the body is buried alive.

II. *The sufferings of the soul.*

1. The bitterness of regret at the loss of the Beatific Vision and of all the joys of Heaven.
2. The sense of guilt. The lost soul will feel that it is lost through its own fault; it will see that it would have been easy to gain Heaven; it will have to own, "Had I resisted such an evil inclination, shunned such an occasion, avoided such and such a companion, listened to such and such advice or to the voice of my conscience,

had I said ever so short morning and night prayers, gone to Mass on Sunday and to the sacraments even once a month, I should be in Heaven; now all is lost."

3. The sense of despair. There is absolutely no ray of hope or consolation.
4. The company in Hell. The evil spirits, all the worst, most loathsome men that ever lived.

III. *The eternity of Hell:* pain without end; pain without a break; pain without relief; pain without one ray of hope.

It behoves me to be on my guard: holy David fell; Judas fell; many great and holy men fell. Yet I need not be despondent: I need not feel discouraged; Christ helps; I have only to be faithful to my spiritual duties and to try to love God; but if ever God's love is not strong enough to keep me from sin: then may the thought of Hell do so.

DEATH.

I. *What the soul leaves behind.*

1. Friends, relations—all personal associations of life.
2. All riches, possessions, pleasures, enjoyments.
3. All objects of vanity; all it was proud of. Especially all objects to which it was inordinately attached; everything which it felt it hard to part from and to detach itself from for the sake of God.
4. All trials, sufferings, hardships, sorrows, &c., all it found hard and unbearable in life.
5. Its own body.
6. Its power of gaining merits.

II. *What the soul keeps.*

1. Its sins—be they great or small.
2. Whatever debt of punishment is yet due, be it for sins not yet forgiven, or for sins already forgiven.
3. Its personal merits for whatever good it did in the state of grace.
4. Hence it will derive particular joy from virtue practised under difficulties, from sacrifices, acts of self-denial, &c.
5. The soul of him who dies in grace also keeps the power of intercession for others.

III. *What helps the soul has in death.*

1. The grace of the sacraments and of prayers for a good death.
2. Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, the Guardian Angel, special patrons.
3. The assistance of friends affords poor help.

Death is certain; its time is uncertain; its circumstances are uncertain; but this is certain, that Christ and His angels and saints will help us, if we have devotion to them.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

I. *The Judge and the soul.*

1. Who is the Judge? He Who died for our sins; the Son of God in His Sacred Manhood; He Who instituted the sacraments; He Who dwells in the tabernacle, always ready to help us, full of love and mercy.
2. What is the soul? His creature: His purchase, purchased by His Blood: His own, perhaps marked with the characters of Baptism? of Confirmation? of Holy Order? one who received Him in Holy Communion? perhaps one bound to Him by religious vows?

II. *The soul with its sins.*

There will come before the Judge:

1. Some souls in mortal sin: the Judge has to punish them with stern justice; what will the Judge say to a soul lost in spite of His death, His redemption, His sacraments, His love? What will be the fear, the shame, the sentiments of a soul in mortal sin?
2. Some souls without any sin, or any debt of temporal punishment.

3. Some souls with a certain debt of punishment still due, or in venial sins. The Judge will receive such a soul with ineffable love, mingled with pity and regret. The soul loves Him; He loves the soul; it is His; it is a member of His mystical body, yet He has to punish it for a time. Did this soul make an act of contrition every night? and every morning the intention to gain all the Indulgences it could each day?

III. *The soul with its merits.*

1. The soul that lived some time in sin will regret the loss of merit during this time.
2. The surprise of the soul at the wealth of merits it has gained by ordinary daily actions.
3. The joy arising from merits gained in sickness, in trouble, in difficulties, by humiliations, temptations, self-denial, obedience, patience, forbearance, charity, kindness, works of zeal, frequently, perhaps, during times of great despondency and weariness of soul.

VENIAL SIN.

I. *The punishment of venial sin.*

God must punish venial sin, unless it be repented of and forgiven. If a man dies in one single deliberate venial sin:

1. God must punish this sin in a soul which loves Him. The soul is just and holy, and loves Him; yet He must punish sin even in such a soul.
2. God punishes it in a soul which He loves, in a member of the mystical body of His Son.
3. God punishes venial sin, though Christ suffered for it, and made reparation for it to God. How great an evil and offence then must venial sin be in the eyes of God!

II. *The stain of venial sin.*

1. It is a more or less deliberate offence against our best friend, our Father, our greatest benefactor, our Redeemer, our loving God.
2. It is a base want of fidelity to Him Whom we love and profess to love.
3. Such infidelity comes from a base motive: from human respect, an evil inclination, sloth, pride, &c.
4. We would not suffer a stain to remain on our clothes or our face: this stain of venial sin soils our inmost souls, the living image

of God, and it diminishes and dims the beauty of sanctifying grace in us.

III. *The danger of venial sin.*

1. There is danger in yielding to an evil inclination: it is yielding a finger to the enemy of our souls; he gains some hold on us.
2. It implies a loss of actual graces: the graces we would have gained had we resisted the evil inclinations; moreover, the soul thus stained has less power and disposition for merit.
3. There is danger in indifference to venial sin, and in any wilful sinful affection. Either may lead to a decrease of love and a beginning of lukewarmness. It is usually by gradually slipping down an inclined plane that the fall of earnest souls is eventually brought about.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

I. *The summons:* One and all.

1. The trumpet sounds; the dead rise, and assemble in the Valley of Josaphat: all appear again in their bodies.
2. Also all angels and all evil spirits will be there.
3. Among the risen men I shall be—full of feeling and consciousness.
4. Christ comes on a cloud with the sign of the Cross, in power and glory. (Cf. St. Matt. xxiv. 30, &c.; St. Matt. xiii. 26, &c.; St. Luke xxi. 27.)

II. *The contrast:* Saints and sinners.

1. The contrast between the angels and the fallen spirits.
2. The glory, beauty, joy, confidence, and triumph of the saints.
3. The deformity, shame, confusion, fear, and despair of the wicked.
4. The wicked stand in their guilt, covered with sins, not one sin unrepented of is hidden.
5. They painfully feel that they are lost entirely through their own fault.
6. The just stand in their merits; the sins they committed have been washed away,

forgiven, forgotten: their triumph over the wicked who despised them.

7. The triumph of Christ in His saints: God's justice, providence, love, and kindness are fully vindicated.

III. *The verdict:* Union and separation.

1. Those who do not believe, are judged already. (St. John iii. 18.)
2. Christ especially judges charity: What you did not do to My brethren, you did not to Me; what you did to them, you did to Me. (St. Matt. xxv. 33, &c.)
3. The wicked are sent into everlasting fire, together with the devils.
4. Hell and eternal despair close over them.
5. Christ unites Himself with the angels and saints, and takes them to His Kingdom and to His everlasting joy.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

I. *The imaginary call of a great king.*

1. Imagine a king raised by Heaven to free a country from unjust and cruel oppression and misery.
2. He calls on the people to join his standard, and to help the cause according to their means and circumstances.

   He invites those willing to engage in active service to be satisfied with the food, accommodation, and comforts he allows himself, and to be ready for hardships, privations, and exertions similar to those undergone by himself.

   They shall share with him the fruits of victory in proportion to their respective devotedness to the cause on those lines.
3. The response to the call.

II. *The call of Christ.*

1. His person; His work; His address; the conditions of His service.
2. The response which it behoves all men to make to His call: the impossibility of attaining to happiness except through Christ; for those who do not follow His call there is absolutely no hope; the Person of Christ, the work He calls us to, the

conditions of His service, the absolute certainty of success are such, that it would be unwise and dishonourable not to engage to follow Him heart and soul.

3. What response a generous love of Christ ought to prompt us to make.
   a. It will urge us not only to follow Him, so as to be saved, but to study His desires, to espouse His interests, not to have any interests except His, to imitate Him as perfectly as possible out of love to Him.
   b. True love of Christ, therefore, leads to devotedness to His person and to His interests.
   c. Christ has come to be our King, our Leader, our Guide: His end is our end; His interests are our interests: His aims our aims; we cannot do better than follow Him in the choice of means to attain the end; He deserves our fullest confidence and love.

THE INCARNATION.

(St. Luke i. 26—38.)

I. *The message.*

1. The messenger: the Angel Gabriel.
2. Mary, in her humility, virginity, devotion.
3. The message: Hail Mary, &c.
   Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son: He shall be called the Son of God.
4. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word." (St. Luke i. 38.)

II. *The mystery.*

1. The Incarnation of the Son of God.
2. Its motive, love; its object, our redemption. What must be the value of a soul!
3. The humility, with which the Son of God stooped to our nature.

III. *The world.*

1. The world was absolutely unconscious of what passed. So the world is now grossly ignorant of supernatural mysteries.
2. The world continued to pursue its vanities and follies as before. If I am wise I shall lead a spiritual life and let the world have its way—except in so far as duty, charity, and devotedness to the interests of our Lord are concerned.

THE NATIVITY.

(St. Luke ii. 1—20.)

I. *The search after a shelter.*

1. St. Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem in obedience to the imperial decree.
2. They seek lodgings, and every door is closed against them.
3. The people refuse to receive them, because they are poor; the people unconsciously turn the Saviour from their doors.

II. *The Birth in the stable.*

1. St. Joseph and Mary take shelter in an empty stable.
2. Their patience and resignation to the will of God.
3. The Son of God is born a speechless child, and laid in a manger.
4. The first lesson He teaches us in this life is poverty and humility.
5. At Bethlehem, the flower of the Jewish nation, the chief descendants of the house of David, the rich and high among the Jews, are gathered together: the Son of God did not choose to be born among them, but in poverty.

III. *The adoration of the Shepherds.*

1. Not to the rich in Bethlehem, but to poor shepherds, angels are sent to announce the Birth of the Saviour.
2. The song of the angels, and their message.
3. The shepherds go to the stable, find and adore the Divine Child: they receive great graces for their homage of faith, hope, and love.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

(St. Luke ii. 22—39.)

I. *The observance of the Law.*

1. St. Joseph and Mary take the Child to the Temple, to fulfil the Law, though they might have thought themselves excused.
2. To do this was a trouble and a humiliation, as they were poor.
3. Our Lord silently submits to it.

II. *The sacrifice.*

1. They offer doves, the sacrifice of the poor.
2. Mary offers her Divine Son.
3. Jesus Christ offers Himself through the Most Pure Heart of Mary.

III. *The prophecy.*

1. Devout Anne recognizes the Saviour; she finds Him in the Temple; her joy; her zeal to make Him known.
2. Holy Simeon recognizes our Lord; his joy; his readiness to die: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant." (St. Luke ii. 29.)
3. His prophecy: A sword shall pierce thy heart. Mary does not shrink from the duty she had undertaken; she still says: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" (St. Luke i. 38); she still offers our Lord to

God, and offers herself for the sufferings in store for her. Her generous sacrifice—consummated at the Cross—made her the Queen of martyrs.

4. Am I as ready for sacrifice? and for trials? Do I trust in God for grace and help?

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF OUR LORD.

(St. Luke ii. 39, 40, 51, 52.)

I. *A life of humility.*

1. Jesus was the Son of God; true God; all powerful, all wise—the absolute Lord of Heaven and earth.
2. He came for the greatest work ever undertaken, the greatest work possible: the salvation of the world; a work greater than the creation.
3. Yet, for thirty years He lived unnoticed and unknown;
4. He did household duties and carpenter's work, like any lad of His age.

II. *A life of obedience.*

1. He was subject and obedient to Mary and Joseph, to His creatures, to those whose Lord and God He was.
2. His obedience was straightforward, plain, and simple. He did what He was told, and as He was told.
3. He knew best how things should be done, but He did them as He was told; because such was God's will.

III. *A life of apostolic zeal.*

1. We would expect that He should show Himself to the world and do great things.

2. Still He had the salvation of souls at heart—He yearned after it.
3. His hidden life was a truly apostolic life through His example.
4. He made it a truly apostolic life through prayer.
5. The humble work He did, the hidden virtues He practised were rendered apostolic through His offering their merits for the salvation of souls. What use do I make of my merits of petition? Morning Oblation.

JESUS IS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE.

(St. Luke ii. 41—52.)

I. *The journey to Jerusalem.*
   1. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph go to Jerusalem in obedience to the Law.
   2. How cold and meaningless was that temple compared to a church!
   3. Care to be exact in the observance of our religious duties.

II. *Jesus is lost.*
   1. The grief of Mary and Joseph when they found that Jesus was lost.
   2. Neither blames the other. Whom do we blame when something goes wrong?
   3. They take immediate steps to find Him again.
   4. How do we act when we have lost Christ, or when He withdraws Himself from us?

III. *Jesus is found in the Temple.*
   1. Jesus is found in the Temple; I, too, may find Him in the Tabernacle.
   2. "Son, why hast Thou done this to *us?*" (St. Luke ii. 48.)
   3. "Did you not know that I had to be about My Father's business?" (St. Luke ii. 49.) I have to do My Father's will, though it may give you pain.

4. The attention of the Jewish priests had been called to the Birth of the promised Redeemer by the Magi and by Herod; this was the first natural opportunity Jesus had to draw their attention to Himself, by His wise, but modest, questions and answers. It was His Father's will, it lay in the scope of His mission, to use this opportunity; this He did, though He knew that it would give pain to His parents; nor did He ask their leave; He wished to show that parents have no right over their children's vocations; He wanted to give a lesson and an example.

THE TWO STANDARDS.

I. *The Standard of Lucifer.*

1. The person of Lucifer, his throne of fire and smoke, his fierce look, his hatred, haughtiness, pride, confusion, violence, fury, &c.
2. He sends out his evil spirits everywhere, to seduce and destroy souls.
3. His address: he tells them how to go about the destruction of souls; make them love riches, this does not look evil, but engages their minds and hearts, and gives a substitute for God; when they love and possess riches, they will be pleased with themselves, will be esteemed and will like to be esteemed and will grow proud; love of riches, love of honour—positive pride.

II. *The Standard of Christ.*

1. Our Lord, humble and amiable, is on a plain at Jerusalem; He lowers Himself to us, condescends to us, is like us.
2. He chooses His Apostles, and sends them to teach men, to lead men to Him, to save their souls.
3. His address: teach them the vanity of the things of this world; teach them detachment from creatures, from this world;

teach them to love and to esteem poverty—then to go a step further in His imitation, to esteem humility—and to esteem humiliations and to love them; and so lead them to true humility.

Love of Christ ought to induce us to follow His guidance, to imitate His example, and to esteem and to love poverty and humiliations, and so to become humble of heart, as He was.

THE THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY.

I. *Degree:* Determination to lose and suffer everything rather than to commit a mortal sin.

1. This is absolutely necessary.
2. We must bear in mind, however, that on occasions of special difficulty, we shall have special grace; it is therefore not a question of estimate of our strength, but of our disposition. This is the disposition of one who well understands the end he is created for.

II. *Degree:* Indifference to riches and poverty, honour and humiliations as such, and a determination to lose and suffer everything rather than commit a deliberate venial sin. This is the disposition of one who well understands the end and use of creatures; it is no more than reason itself demands.

III. *Degree:* A determination to choose poverty rather than riches, humiliations rather than honour; sufferings rather than joy, not only when they conduce to God's greater glory, but when exactly the same honour of God, the same fruits of salvation, and the same merits would follow

from either: in view of the personal love and imitation of Christ.

1. This is the disposition resulting from the meditations on the Kingdom of Christ and the Two Standards.
2. We have chosen Christ as our Leader, our Guide; personal love, attachment, and loyalty to Him should prompt us to choose the means He chose, and to follow His choice, so long as our end may not be better attained by other means. He chose poverty, humiliations, suffering; if we are truly attached to Him, we shall choose the same for His sake—unless the contrary is more conducive to the salvation of souls.

THREE CLASSES OF MEN.

I. *An attachment.*

A man inherits a property containing a mine. (A Religious may apply the consideration to an undue love, *e.g.*, of his own will.)

1. The man would like to be perfect (as the youth in the Gospel, St. Matt. xix. 16—22) and to free himself from the attachment he feels to his property, but he will do nothing except what pleases him, he will, *e.g.*, give a subscription to a charity which is just fashionable, but he will do nothing else. (The Religious seeks his own way as much as possible.)
2. The man will give alms, live economically, work the mine to obtain the means to do more good, but will not give up the property. (The Religious will pray, accommodate himself to others, &c., but tries to get his own way with Superiors in one point.)
3. The man is ready to do anything, that is to God's greater honour, even to give up his property. (The Religious does as he is told.)

II. *A fault.*

1. A sick man wants to get better, but will use no remedy except what he likes. (A person has a fault, *e.g.*, a bitter feeling against another, but will take no steps to overcome it.)
2. The sick man will take medicine and do anything except what the doctor declares necessary, *e.g.*, an operation, or keeping to his bed. The person will do no harm to the other, will not speak against him, will pray for him, but will do him no kindness.
3. The sick man is ready to do anything the doctor wishes. (The person is willing even to do any service to the other.)

III. *Acquisition of a virtue.*

1. A young man wants to become a physician, he goes to attend a university, but he will not study, he does not attend to lectures, &c. A man wishes to be humble, but will do nothing calculated to lead to humility.
2. The student studies, attends to the lectures, walks the hospitals, but he will not go in for an examination. The man prays for humility, refrains from speaking in his own praise, he acknowledges also some of his faults, &c., but he will not stand being slighted or found fault with without reason.
3. The student is ready to do everything necessary to become a physician. The man who wishes to be humble is willing to bear humiliations silently.

THE CALL OF THE APOSTLES.

(St. Matt. iv. 18—22; x. 1—4; St. Mark i. 16—20; ii. 14; iii. 13—19; St. Luke vi. 13—16.)

I. *The call of the Apostles.*

1. The Apostles did not *deserve* the call, but they had dispositions which endeared them to our Lord, and disposed them for the grace; they were simple, sincere, straightforward, well-meaning, hard-working men.
2. The grace of their call was a gratuitous gift.
3. They were called from a miserable, wretched, selfish world and life
   a. to personal intercourse and friendship with Christ;
   b. to the service of Christ;
   c. to a share in the work of Christ;
   d. to the Cross of Christ.

II. *The response to the call.*

1. The Apostles followed the call promptly and resolutely.
2. They did so, because they were detached from this world.
3. They did so without fear, with courage, because they had full confidence in our Lord.
4. They remained faithful to their call and to their Master (except Judas).

III. *The grace of vocation.*

1. Christ takes an interest in them; He personally attends to their training; He is patient with their failings.
2. They receive special graces to enable them to act up to their vocation. Without such grace they could not have remained faithful to their vocation, as without grace we can do nothing (St. John xv. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 3); but we can do all things in Him Who strengthens us. (Philipp. iv. 13.)
3. The Apostles, on their part, corresponded with grace. This increased their merits and graces; thus merits and graces went on increasing so that they rejoiced in their vocation and in the very Cross of Christ (Acts v. 41; Galat. vi. 14), and that no longer they lived, but Christ lived in them. (Galat. ii. 20.)

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD.

I. *Work.*

1. Our Lord did the will of the Father who sent Him. (St. John iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38.)
2. He went about preaching and teaching.
3. He instructed people in private conversation.
4. He used every opportunity of imparting instruction to people: *e.g.*, He received Nicodemus (St. John iii. 1—21) at night—He did not say: It is inconvenient now; He forbore with his want of courage. Consider also, *e.g.*, His conversation with the Samaritan woman (St. John iv. 7—42), Zachæus. (St. John xix. 1—10.) He lived for others, to help them and to do them good.
5. He went about doing good, helping people in their troubles, working miracles, having pity on the multitudes. (St. Matt. xv. 32; St. Mark viii. 2.)
6. He never tired even of trying to teach His enemies, the Pharisees.
7. He devoted Himself to the training of His Apostles and those committed to His care.

II. *Prayer.*

1. He frequently retired into solitude to spend time in prayer.

2. He lived continually a life of interior recollection.
3. He lived practically a life of union with God, by constant devotedness to God's interests.
4. His occasional prayers, *e.g.*, before working miracles, &c.
5. He offered His whole life and work to His Father for the salvation of souls.

III. *Suffering.*

1. The whole tenor of His life was suffering.
2. He suffered weariness, &c., incident to His work.
3. He suffered from the slowness, &c., of His disciples.
4. He suffered the opposition, calumnies, persecutions of His enemies.
5. He suffered from the ingratitude and indifference of the people.
6. He suffered disappointment and failure.
7. The love with which He suffered and His conformity with the will of God.

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

(St. Matt. v. 1—12.)

I. *The meaning of the Eight Beatitudes:*

The poor in spirit; the meek; they that mourn; they that hunger and thirst after justice; the merciful; the clean of heart; the peacemakers; they that suffer persecution for justice sake.

II. *The principles of the Eight Beatitudes:*

1. They are a picture of the Sacred Heart; we can study in them the principles of our Lord, the dispositions and sentiments of His Sacred Heart.
2. They are directly opposed to the principles of this world, to the dispositions, desires, sentiments of the children of the world.
3. Which do I choose? Is it wise, is it becoming that I should be satisfied to loiter half-way between the two?

III. *The blessings of the Eight Beatitudes:*

1. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; they shall possess the land; they shall be comforted; their desires shall be fulfilled; they shall obtain mercy; they shall see God; they shall be called the children of God; their reward is great in Heaven.

2. The promises and hopes of the world end in vanity and disappointment, the fruits of the Eight Beatitudes are eternal; we see them in Christ and His saints; contentment of heart in this life—eternal happiness in the life to come.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

(St. Matt. xxvi. 36—57; St. Mark xiv. 32—52; St. Luke xxii. 39—54; St. John xviii. 1—13.)

I. *The Agony.*

1. *The causes: the sins of men;* our Lord, as the responsible Head of our race, was burdened with them; He had taken them upon Himself in the sight of God. Among these sins were mine.

The sufferings before Him: He saw what He was to suffer, and this filled Him with fear.

The ingratitude of men: millions would be lost in spite of His Passion; millions would prove ungrateful, cold, indifferent to Him.

2. *The sufferings of His Heart:* fear, anxiety, terror, gloom, desolation, horror, darkness; still He willed to suffer, because He loved us and because His Father wished it.

II. *The Prayer.* The petition: If it can be, let this chalice pass. The resignation: But not My will, Thy will be done. The repetition: our Lord persevered in prayer; three times He said the self-same prayer, to give us an example in Himself.

III. *The Capture.* Judas and the band of ruffians come; the kiss of Judas; Jesus asks that

His disciples should not be hurt. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus; Jesus works two miracles: He heals the ear of Malchus, and the men fall down at His answer: "It is I." Then He is bound and led away, and His disciples flee and leave Him. For the last time Christ showed forth His power, His Divinity; He now gives His Humanity entirely into the hands of His enemies. His Divinity only sustains Him, so that He may suffer all and feel all.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

(St. Matt. xxvi. 57—75; xxvii.; St. Matt. xiv. 53—72; xv.; St. Luke xxii. 54—71; St. John xviii. 13—40; xix.)

I. *What our Lord suffered in His Body:* Rough treatment; a night without sleep; exhaustion; buffeting; having His hair and beard pulled; being dragged about; the scourging; the crown of thorns; the weight of the Cross; the fall under the Cross; being dragged up and goaded on.

II. *What our Lord suffered in His honour:* Unworthy treatment; He is treated as a criminal; the crowds gaze at Him; He is judged by His enemies, falsely accused, falsely condemned—yet no, and this greatly aggravated His humiliation. As the head of our race He made Himself responsible for our sins, and was therefore guilty of death, even in the sight of His Father: He was loaded with my sins, and with all the sins ever committed. He was spit upon, dragged through the streets; mocked by Herod as a fool; stripped of His clothes, ridiculed as a King. The people prefer Barabbas; they cry, "Crucify Him." He is condemned to the Cross; He has to carry the Cross;

He is derided and mocked even on the Cross.

III. *What He suffered in His Heart:* The base ingratitude of men, of those for whom He had worked miracles; the treason of Judas; the flight of the Apostles, and the denial of Peter; the thought of His Mother; but especially the dreadful desolation which He suffered through being in a sense forsaken by God; the knowledge that He was burdened with all the sins ever committed, and was treated by His Father as though Himself guilty of them.

CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

(St. Matt. xxvii. 33—36; St. Mark xv. 22—47; St. Luke xxiii. 33—56; St. John xix. 17—42.)

I. *The sufferings of Christ on the Cross.*

1. His pains; His aching wounds; His throbbing head; His pierced hands and feet; His wounded Heart; His thirst; His position on the Cross.
2. He is mocked and insulted; abandoned by His disciples, by the people for whom He did so much, &c.
3. His desolation: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46; St. Mark xv. 34.) He is punished for my sins; His humanity is supported by His Godhead in existence and in full consciousness of all sufferings.

II. *The Death of Christ on the Cross:* God, the Author of life, dies; His human soul leaves His sacred body; nature is darkened; the rocks are split; the veil of the Temple is rent asunder; the dead rise from their graves. His lifeless Body hangs on the Cross; it is pierced with a lance, blood and water issue from His side; His Heart is dead, but He loves me with ineffable love even in death.

III. *The Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross:* It is consummated. Christ has offered Himself a sacrifice for my sins, and for all sins. Full and infinite reparation is made to the Father.

I am a member of His mystical body: it behoves me to join Him in His sacrifice of love, of reparation, of salvation, and to cherish the spirit of sacrifice.

THE DESOLATION OF MARY.

I. *The Sorrows of Mary.*

1. The shame and humiliation she suffered when her Son was treated as a criminal.
2. Her grief at the sight of the sufferings of her Son; her sympathy, she suffered with Him; her very love for Him increased her pain.
3. She suffered also at the thought of the sins which caused His sufferings.
4. She suffered at the thought of the reprobation of her people.
5. She suffered at the thought of the ingratitude of the people.
6. She bitterly felt the loss of her Son.

II. *The disposition of Mary.*

1. Mary was accustomed to self-denial; this virtue helped to give her strength, but did not prevent her from feeling her sorrow. This same remark applies to the following considerations:
2. Mary cherished great submission to God's holy will, &c.
3. Mary loved the Cross of Christ, &c.
4. Mary had the glory of God and the salvation of souls deeply at heart, &c.

III. *The fruits of her Sorrows.*

1. Increase in grace and merits; her eternal reward.
2. She became the Queen of Martyrs; a refuge of souls in sorrow and distress.
3. The graces she obtained for souls by offering these her sufferings, in union with those of her Son, for the welfare of souls.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

(St. Matt. xxviii. 1—15; St. Mark xvi. 1—11; St. Luke xxiv. 1—11; St. John xx. 1—18.)

I. *The triumph of the Resurrection.*

1. The dead body of Christ is in the tomb; the tomb is sealed and guarded. Some holy women go to anoint the body, and feel anxious lest they be unable to remove the stone from the entrance.
2. Christ rises from the tomb by His own power; the earth quakes, the guards are stupefied.
3. His body really lives again; it is now endowed with immortality.
4. How changed it is! beautiful, free, glorious, unable to suffer.
5. It is still marked with the five wounds. They are no source of pain now, but of glory and joy.
6. Christ has triumphed over the powers of evil, over sin and death. He says to us: "Have confidence, I have overcome the world." (St. John xvi. 33.)

II. *The joy of the Resurrection.*

1. The joy of the humanity of our Lord; His work is done; His sufferings are past, eternal glory is before Him.

2. The joy of His Sacred Mother: she had suffered most with Him, she now rejoices most with Him.
3. The joy of His Apostles and disciples, of St. Mary Magdalen, of all those who had been really devoted to Him.
4. The confusion, disappointment, and fear of His enemies.
5. Each sigh, word, act, pain, has been counted and weighed to be rewarded now. His promise to us in the Kingdom of Christ.

III. *The hope of the Resurrection.*

1. Christ's Resurrection is a pledge of our future resurrection: as He rose, so we shall rise: He is the head, we the members.
2. Our resurrection will be like to His: our bodies will be changed as His was—we too shall derive the greatest glory and joy from what was the most hard and humiliating in life.

THE APPARITIONS OF OUR LORD.

(St. Matt. xxviii. 16—20; St. Mark xvi. 12—19; St. Luke xxiv. 13—49; St. John xx. 11—31; xxi. 1.)

I. *In His apparitions our Lord wished to show His union with us.*

1. He wanted to give us proofs that He was really alive, alive with the same body, in which He lived, suffered, and died.
2. He wished to bring it home to us that He is our head, our living head, and so to encourage our union with Him, and our confidence in Him, by showing His union with us.
3. He wanted to show to us that He continues to take an interest in us, so that we might look upon Him with confidence and not as though He were far removed from us.
4. He wished to foster our hope and courage, by showing what we may hope for.

II. *In His apparitions our Lord wished to show His love to us.*

1. He shows us His personal love: He deals with His Blessed Mother, Mary Magdalen, the eleven, St. Thomas, the two disciples who go to Emmaus, St. Peter, &c., personally, individually, as before in life.

2. He shows us His human love: He deals with them as a man, who feels as they feel; they feel that He understands them, while they can understand Him: He shows them His Wounds, argues with them, eats with them, encourages them.
3. Such are His feelings towards and His dealings with me, from the tabernacle.

III. *In His apparitions our Lord wished to show us the care which He takes of us.*

1. He speaks to His disciples about the Kingdom of God; gives them charge to preach, to teach, to baptize, to forgive sins—appoints St. Peter to be pastor, &c.
2. He took great care to convince His disciples of His Resurrection, St. Mary Magdalen also, the two going to Emmaus, and St. Thomas. He proved His love for and forgiveness of St. Peter, &c. He took a great interest in the ordinary life of them all. "I will be with you." (St. Matt. xxviii. 20.)
3. The like care He now takes of me: the like interest He shows in me. He understands my needs: "Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. xi. 28.)

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

(St. Mark xvi. 19, 20; St. Luke xxiv. 50—53; Acts i. 1—14.)

I. *The Ascension of Christ into Heaven.*
   1. Our Lord goes with His disciples to Mount Olivet, speaks to them, shows interest in them, gives them advice, blesses them, and rises to Heaven.
   2. He now enters into His full glory, into His full reward; His happiness.
   3. His joy, and the increase of joy in Heaven.

II. *The life of His disciples on earth.*
   1. The disciples see Him depart and know that they will see Him no more on earth, and that they have a hard work before them.
   2. Still, whatsoever their feelings may have been, they adored, and went back to Jerusalem with great joy.
   3. Two Angels appeared and told them He would come again in like manner; this hope, their confidence in the promise of the Holy Ghost, and their knowledge of the union of Christ with them, were the cause of their joy at His departure.

III. *Christ's union with His disciples on earth.*
   1. Christ sends the Holy Ghost upon His disciples.

2. Christ is the living head; they the living members of His mystical body.
3. He is united with them by grace and by love.
4. They are dispensers of His mysteries, of His pardon, of His grace, of His power.
5. He helps them by His power and grace.
6. He is always living to make intercession for us.
7. He does not leave us orphans (St. John xiv. 18); He is with us all days, even to the consummation of the world. (St. Matt. xxviii. 20.)

HEAVEN.

I. *The glory of the body.*

1. The beauty of the risen body. "The just shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (St. Matt. xiii. 43); they shall be like the body of Christ in His Resurrection and Transfiguration.
2. The spiritual freedom of the risen body. "It shall rise a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 44.)
3. The fulness of life and immortality of the risen body—no more liable to pain.

II. *The society of Heaven.*

1. The abode of Heaven: a new Heaven and a new earth. (Apoc. xxi.)
2. The sight of the angels and saints in all their beauty.
3. The society of the angels and saints, and of the Blessed Virgin.
4. Our union with them; I shall be one of them; we shall be one family.

III. *The Beatific Vision of God.*

1. We shall see God, as He sees Himself, with a supernatural power of vision.
2. We shall not only see Him, His own, essence, His infinite beauty, but shall love,

enjoy, and possess Him as He possesses Himself, by a supernatural power of enjoyment and love.

3. We shall possess God, moreover, by every title that can give us satisfaction; we shall possess Him as a gift of love, as an inheritance of love, as a reward of love and as a God of love—by virtue of mutual personal love.
4. This happiness will be eternal; without break, without diminution, without a shadow that ever could dim it.

THE MOTHER OF GOD IN THE INFANT CHURCH.

I. *Her position.*

1. Her personal sanctity and her patient longing after union with her Son.
2. She is the Queen of the infant Church: through her the Redeemer came into the world. She is the Mother of God, of the Redeemer. He has established His Kingdom: she is the Queen; and is looked up to as such.
3. She is the Mother of grace: Christ is priest and victim—she gave Him to the world and to God. God asked her consent, and availed Himself of it for the work and the sacrifice of redemption.
4. She is a marvel of grace; her privileges, her innocence, sanctity, &c.
5. People regard her, as St. Elizabeth regarded her. Whence is this to me? (St. Luke i. 43) and call her blessed. (St. Luke i. 48.)
6. She is our Mother—the Mother of beautiful love: she loves all; they belong to her Son; He bought them, &c. All can approach her; she is humble.

II. *Her influence.*

1. Her presence: she is a link between Heaven and earth, and so unites men with God.

2. The influence of her example, and of her encouragement.
3. The influence of her counsel. The Apostles and first Christians are frequently gathered round her for prayers, *e.g.*, before Pentecost; she is the Mistress of apostolic devotion.
4. Her conversation and intercourse fill people with love of her Son, with confidence in Him, and with zeal for souls.
5. She is the apostle of the Incarnation; she speaks of and makes known the mysteries of the Infancy of our Lord.

III. *Her intercession.*

1. She prays for her people; for sinners, for the Church, &c.
2. She prays especially also for those who ask for prayers.
3. She prays for blessings on the labours of the Apostles.
4. She offers her merits of satisfaction and of impetration; merits for work, prayer, sufferings; merits enhanced by her intense love—merits enhanced by her generosity. She thinks not of herself—her own merits, &c., but only of the interests of her Son and of His Church.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

I. *The benefits God has bestowed upon us.*

1. The benefits of creation: our lives, body, soul, all its powers. Also the benefits of preservation; He continually keeps me in existence; and the benefits of His Providence: food, clothes, &c.
2. The benefits of His Redemption, the Incarnation of the Son of God, His life, labours, sufferings, His death, His sacrifice, His atonement, His merits, His Church, His sacraments.
3. The benefits of sanctification: the graces given to my soul; the grace of vocation to religious life and other personal graces.

II. *God's presence in all creatures for my sake.*

1. God, the God of infinite love is everywhere present for my sake.
2. He is in every creature and preserves it in existence for me.
3. He preserves everything in its particular class of existence, and in the degree of life in which each thing is: plants, animals, and myself.
4. Where God is, He loves me; I am completely overshadowed and surrounded by His love.

III. *God's activity in all creatures for my sake.*

1. His co-operation with the action of creatures. He not only is present in them, but keeps them all in their respective work and actions; I am continually thus overshadowed by His active Providence.
2. God helps me in my natural and supernatural actions.
3. Wherever I turn, God's love is active in my behalf. Should I not confide in His love?

IV. *The profusion of God's bounty to me and throughout His whole creation.*

1. Favours flow to me from Him as waters from their source.
2. As the rays of light stream forth into the universe from the sun.
3. The whole world is irradiate with His love, His favours, His bounty; and especially the moral order, in truth, virtues, hope, joy, &c.

THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

I. *The Heart of Jesus, the organ of His love.*

1. The Heart of Jesus was called into existence because God loved us and for the purpose of manifesting His love.
2. The human heart is the symbol of love; it indicates love.
3. The heart is the shrine of love; the seat of affection, &c.
4. The heart is the living and feeling organ of love.

II. *The love of the Sacred Heart.*

1. The Divine love, with which Jesus loved us from all eternity; with this He loves us in an infinite, unchangeable love.
2. His human love; He loves us as man loves man; He can understand all our feelings and we understand His.
3. His Eucharistic love: He instituted a special mystery, an unparalleled marvel of love; He is with us a perpetual prisoner, a perpetual sacrifice of love, and in the Holy Eucharist He loves us with all His Divine and human love.

III. *The fruits of His love.*

1. This love prompted the Sacred Heart to redeem me, to work, to pray, to suffer, and

to die for me—to rise again and to dwell in the Blessed Sacrament.

2. Through the love of His Sacred Heart, He offers Himself, *i.e.*, His Body and Blood, daily a sacrifice for me, and pours forth countless graces of salvation.
3. Innumerable souls are inflamed with Its love to heroic virtue, to charity, to zeal, and are filled with comfort and consolation.
4. It challenges our confidence, and hence our countless prayers, which draw down unnumbered blessings from Heaven.

SUMMARY OF THE CHIEF RESOLUTIONS.

I. *Self-denial:*

1. In the practice of duty and obedience.
2. In the practice of charity.
3. In the practice of patience: in daily troubles; with others; with ourselves.

II. *Zeal.*

1. That care which is keenly alive to the value of time.
2. That care which does all we can for the suffering souls.
3. That care which leads us to do our best for the salvation and sanctification of souls, by using accidental occasions, by diligence in our duties; by giving good example and edification; by prayer, and especially by applying our merits in impetration for others, in union with and in the spirit of the Apostleship of Prayer.

III. *Confidence.*

1. Confidence in God's grace and love, and in the grace of our vocation.
2. Confidence in prayer, in our own prayers, &c.
3. Confidence in the prayers of others.
4. Confidence as to the help of God's grace in temptation.

5. Confidence as to the help of God's grace in the fulfilment of our duties—in difficulties, &c.
6. Confidence in the help of God's grace as regards our progress in virtue.
7. Confidence in God's grace and love as regards our final perseverance.

CONSIDERATION I.

OUR FAULTS, INCLINATIONS, AND DISPOSITIONS.

I. *Our faults:* in thoughts, words, deeds; with regard to God, to others, to ourselves.

Faults in *prayer:* not giving due time to it; wilful distractions; want of resistance to drowsiness; want of energy to rouse oneself from mental vacancy and dreamy want of thought. Neglect of important "Additions." General want of recollection.

Faults of *pride:* neglect of obedience and submission.

Faults against *charity:* resentment; harshness to others; anger. Too free talking about the faults of others. Want of kindness.

II. *Evil inclinations:* Some of our faults have their source in the general weakness of our nature, or in some personal short-comings. The latter deserve attention, the former need not make us uneasy.

Some faults spring from such inclinations as sloth, love of ease, self-esteem especially, love of our own will, dread of humiliations.

III. *The disposition we should have.*

1. Moderate care to correct our faults.

2. Special attention to our evil inclinations.
3. Desire to treat evil inclinations as distinct from us, as hostile to us.
4. Determination not to be discouraged by our faults and evil inclinations; patience with ourselves.
5. Particular examination of conscience.

CONSIDERATION II.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

I. *The importance which we ought to attach to the spirit of prayer.*

1. Prayer is the raising of the heart to God—it is intercourse with God. A servant must needs have intercourse with his master; the employed with the employer; the soldier with his officer—the officer with the commander; the son with his father; the spouse with her bridegroom: much more we with our Father, our Redeemer, our God.
2. Without prayer it is impossible to lead a religious, a supernatural, a spiritual, a meritorious, or even a Christian life.
3. Christ gave us the example of prayer; St. Paul exhorts us to pray always. (1 Thess. v. 17; St. Luke xviii. 1.)
4. All saints without exception were men of prayer.
5. Prayer is one of the chief means to obtain God's grace.

II. *The means which help us to cherish a spirit of prayer.*

1. Attention to our daily spiritual devotions and prayers.

2. Union with God: by means of: (*a*) the *morning oblation*; (*b*) devotedness to the interests of our Lord; (*c*) doing our daily work in the spirit of *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* —*i.e.*, from motives of love towards God and our brethren whom we serve for God's sake; and also in the spirit of apostolic *zeal*, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; (*d*) by means of occasional aspirations of love.
3. Confidence in God—recourse to prayer in all troubles and difficulties.

CONSIDERATION III.

THE RELIGIOUS VOWS.

I. *The value and importance of religious vows.*

1. They are a *complete* surrender to God: of body, of outward goods, and of the soul and will.
2. They are a *free* surrender, made with free and deliberate choice.
3. They are an *irrevocable* surrender; sealed by a distinct promise and by solemn obligations.
4. They are a sacrifice *made to God* under the official sanction of the Church, and accepted by God and by the Church.
5. They imply and require a special vocation, and a perfect imitation of Christ.
6. Of their own nature the religious vows are a sacrifice of love, and place us in a state of perfection.
7. They enhance the merits derived from the practice of the respective virtues.

II. *The obligation of the religious vows.*

1. They are binding under mortal sin.
2. We have, however, to distinguish well between the vow and the virtue; *i.e.*,

between the strict obligation of the vow and the perfection of the virtue.

3. There is no strict obligation to cherish the spirit of the vows, nor to practise the respective virtues; but the love of our Lord ought to induce us to endeavour to do both to the best of our power.

III. *The observance of the religious vows.*

1. *Poverty:* care to cherish the love and spirit of poverty; care not to commit distinct faults against it, and to rejoice at feeling now and then some of its effects.

2. *Chastity.* Great esteem and care, yet not so as to mistake temptations for sins. Firmness of the will in shunning love of ease and comfort. Personal devotedness to our Lord, the spouse of chaste souls.

3. *Obedience.* Care as to its external observance; endeavour to practise submission of the mind and the will. Conviction that in obedience we do the will of God.

CONSIDERATION IV.

HUMILITY.

I. *The spirit of humility.*

1. Horror of pride and esteem of humility. Everybody likes a humble man; everybody abhors a proud man, especially a proud priest or Religious—so does God—but to the humble He gives His grace. Pride is the sin of Satan, and the source of the worst and the most obstinate sins; humility is absolutely indispensable to the practice of virtue.
2. Willingness to acknowledge one's faults and shortcomings, and to bear humiliations in reparation for past sins.
3. An earnest desire at least to have a desire of humiliations, in view of the humiliations suffered by our Lord, praying that we may share in that personal love of Him which prompts sainted souls to wish to be like Him, in embracing and feeling humiliations as He did.

II. *The practice of humility.*

1. Obedience, patience, submission to God's will.

2. Silence when blamed, found fault with, or injured.
3. Interior forbearance and forgiveness.
4. Acts of kindness to others, little services which cost some self-sacrifice, some humiliation.
5. Reserve about our own opinions; deference to those of others.
6. Joy when we are left unnoticed; when we have disagreeable work to do, are slighted, snubbed, or looked down upon.
7. Gratitude to God for the humiliation we find in realizing our own faults.

CONSIDERATION V.

THREE-FOLD MERIT.

I. *Personal merits of grace and glory.*

1. If the soul is in the state of grace, probably all our actions, which are not evil either in themselves, or in their circumstances, or because of some base intention; and certainly all actions done from a good intention, have a three-fold merit.

2. One class of merit is personal, *i.e.*, we cannot offer it up in favour of another; the fruit remains our own.

a. Of this class are the merits of glory, which give us a claim to a special, additional reward in Heaven. These merits are lost by mortal sin, but regained by its pardon.

b. There is also a personal merit, which consists in an increase of sanctifying grace and of God's love in our hearts. This grace and love are the source of merit in us; hence, according as the source is strengthened, all merits which we gain are increased together with our power of meriting.

3. In the state of mortal sin, a man can do nothing for which he will receive a reward

in Heaven. In the state of grace he cannot help continually increasing his eternal happiness by the merits which he gains.

II. *Merits of satisfaction.*

1. Every good work done in the state of grace gives us a claim to remission of some temporal punishment.
2. These merits we can offer on behalf of others; Religious Orders do this by granting communion of merits to other Orders, associations, &c. We can also offer these merits for the suffering souls.
3. The oblation of these merits for the suffering souls is itself very meritorious. By the Heroic Act all these merits are offered.

III. *Merits of impetration.*

1. By every good work we obtain a claim to some temporal or spiritual favour for ourselves or for others. By the morning oblation of the Apostleship of Prayer, these merits are offered for the interests of the Sacred Heart.
2. All merits gained by our actions are enhanced if these are done from *love*, or if difficulty is involved in the action.
3. Merits offered to obtain temporal favours obtain these, only when God foresees that they will not prove prejudicial to the interests of the soul. If merits are offered to obtain graces for others, these graces are always given to them, but they are not forced to use them.

CONSIDERATION VI.

CHARITY.

I. *Motives of charity.*

1. We are all children of the same Father; created to do the work of our Father—destined for the same eternal happiness.
2. This is especially true of brethren in Religion: members of the same body; fed on the same food, bound together by the same end and religious principles.
3. The love of Christ, who bids us love our brethren; who considers done to Him personally what we do to them.
4. The great merits and rewards of charity: especially as the exercise of charity implies the practice of countless virtues: patience, faith, humility, forbearance, self-control, self-denial, &c.

II. *The standard of charity.*

1. Do to others as you would wish to be done by. (St. Luke vi. 32; St. Matt. xix. 19, and xxii. 39; St. Mark xii. 31, &c.)
2. "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (St. John xv. 12, and xiii. 34.) As Christ loves us.

3. As we love Christ, for He considers as done to Himself, what we do to our brethren. (St. Matt. xxv. 31—46.) Christ laid down His life for all—He has given proof that He loves all as Himself.

III. *The practice of charity.*

1. Seeing Christ in all, in the spirit of faith.
2. Watching over the affections of the heart; guarding against feelings of resentment, spite, ill-will, aversion, contempt, &c.
3. Setting a guard on our tongue, lest we talk bitterly about others, or too freely about their faults—lest we offend them by bitterness or jesting.
4. Performing acts of charity: the spirit of faith and joy in our service of others; patience and forbearance with them; anxiety not to be troublesome; kindness in rendering little services; study to accommodate ourselves to others.

CONSIDERATION VII.

LOVE OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

I. *Motives.*

1. *The love of our Lord.* Personal love: we give Him pleasure, if we love to suffer from love of Him. Love of gratitude: He suffered for me, why should I not suffer for Him? desire of imitation: He suffered, should I not wish to be like Him?
2. The example of the saints. All the saints rejoiced in suffering.
3. Nothing is more meritorious than suffering; self-love has no part in it.
4. It is especially meritorious, because it gives occasion for the practice of countless virtues: faith, hope, love, patience, forbearance, submission to God's will, comformity with God's will, &c.
5. It purifies the soul from evil affections and inclinations.
6. Love of suffering, brings real contentment to the soul. We have not actually to suffer more through our love of suffering, but what we have to suffer, we suffer with greater ease and comfort, and yet, at the same time, with more profit and merit.

II. *The love of the Cross put in practice.*

1. Cherishing a desire of suffering, or at least esteem of and a wish to have such a desire.
2. Frequent attention, in meditation, to the motives which may help us to acquire or to increase our love of suffering.
3. Patience and submission to God's will in our daily trials, in everything we feel hard to us —in pain, humiliations, grief, disappointments, &c.
4. Joy in our little daily sufferings, or an act of self-abasement and humility when we find ourselves too weak to feel actual joy in them.
5. Voluntary practice of self-denial, doing acts of kindness and charity which are humiliating and distasteful, &c., when occasion offers itself.

CONSIDERATION VIII.

JOY IN GOD.

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice. (Philipp. iv. 4.)

I. *We ought to rejoice at the thought of the love of God.*

1. The Almighty and Eternal God loves us. He loves us with infinite love; He loved us from all eternity, before we existed; there is not a moment in which He does not love us. He will love us in all eternity; He loves us more than any friend can; more than a mother can love her child; more than we can love Him; more than we love ourselves.

2. He has given us proofs of His love. He created us, He preserves us; He redeemed us; He is present for us in the Blessed Sacrament, He has made us living members of Christ's Mystical Body, &c.; He daily showers down on us innumerable natural and supernatural benefits.

II. *Joy in the thought of the Providence of God.*

God's Providence watches over us; He always sees us, cares for us; not a hair falls from our head without His knowledge and leave; He knows how to turn everything to

account on our behalf. Were everybody to forsake us, God would not forsake us.

III. *Joy in the thought of the service of God.*

This God we are allowed to serve, to love, to be familiar with. This God of love will reward us for everything we do in His service, and He gives us grace to do it; He will reward us not only for prayer and good works, for our joys too, and especially for everything we suffer, for everything disagreeable. We have only to be of good will and to confide in Him; He will do the rest.

CONSIDERATION IX.

REPENTANCE.

Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance. (St. Matt. iii. 8.)

We should give expression to our repentance by:

I. *Sorrow for the sins we are guilty of.*

1. What sins have I on my conscience now? mortal? venial? deeds? words? thoughts? omissions? desires? dispositions? &c.
2. Am I sorry for these sins? if so, from what motive? if not so, why is this?
3. Necessity of sorrow; its nature—not a mere feeling. Sorrow must be in the will, its test is a good, definite, and strong resolution.
4. Shame and confusion is also a wholesome feeling, when allied to hope of pardon.
5. This sorrow, in practice, leads to confession, contrition, acts of penance, and self-denial.

Take care not to mistake temptations and involuntary faults for sins, so as to be discouraged, disquieted, or have your attention drawn aside from virtue.

II. *Reparation for sins we have been guilty of.*

1. Be not scrupulous and uneasy about sins already confessed or about your past confessions.

2. Occasionally it is useful to remember past sins with shame, sorrow, and gratitude for their pardon; and to do some penance for them, for fear of some punishment remaining still due.
3. Our love of God and gratitude to Him should also induce us to make reparation.
4. Such reparation consists in penance, self-denial, and especially an increase of zeal.

III. *Guarding against sin for the future.*

1. (Philipp. ii. 12.) Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
2. Without a false feeling of security, but with confidence *in God*, not in ourselves.
3. What is my weakness—what are my dangers? what my occasions? Do I shun these?
4. What means do I use? Confession? Communion? Examination of conscience?
5. Self-denial is a great help, it gives us self-control and grace.
6. Above all we should mistrust ourselves, but have full confidence in God and in His grace, and, therefore, should pray to Him for help.

CONSIDERATION X.

THE WILL.

I. *The nature of the will.*

1. It is a spiritual power; the companion power to the intellect.
2. Feelings, affections, sensations, sentiments, inclinations, cravings, even wishes and desires, &c., are in the line of the will, they belong to the lower department of functions which culminate in the will, but they are not the will itself; hence they may be either not wilful or they may become wilful.
3. Sin ultimately depends on the will; so does merit; even what is sinful is not imputed as sin, except in so far as it is wilful.
4. The will is essentially made for what is good; what is good is its natural object.
5. It naturally shrinks from what comes before it as evil in every respect; it naturally inclines to what comes before it as good in every respect.
6. It is a blind power: it follows the lead of the intellect; but in our compound nature it may be influenced by leanings and impressions of our lower nature.

7. Meditation on the wickedness of sin, the evils of selfishness, the goodness of God, and the advantages of virtue, is calculated to make the study of holiness more easy.

II. *Its freedom.*

1. The will is free.
2. Because the will is free, we are capable of rights and duties.
3. Human responsibility has its root in the freedom of the intellectual will.
4. Because we have a free will, and live in a state of servitude and probation, we can gain merits in the sight of God; supernatural merits, if we have the supernatural life of grace in us.
5. Thus we have it in our power not only to obtain Heaven as a reward justly due to us, but to increase the eternal happiness of Heaven every moment by the merits we gain.

III. *Its power.*

1. The will is free; nobody can force it.
2. God has the power to force it, or to take away its freedom, but He is not inconsistent in His actions; having once given us a free will, He will not force it.
3. This being so, we can stand in the sight of the infinite God and say: "I will not do what Thou commandest:" or "I will do what Thou forbiddest."
4. Certainly God's grace is necessary to us, but His grace He will not withhold.

5. This being so, we can live in sin if we choose, but there is no power in Heaven, on earth, or in Hell which can compel us to sin, if we choose not to commit sin.
6. The effect of a determined act of the will continues, till it is somehow or other consciously withdrawn; therefore it is wise to say: "I will not sin," when assailed by inward temptations against faith, chastity, charity, &c.
7. It is a great help to holiness to *will* perfect devotedness to the Person and the interests of our Lord, however imperfect natural feelings may be.
8. As every power, so the will is strengthened by exercise, *i.e.*, by definite acts of the will, especially in opposition to natural and selfish feelings.
9. Be careful to avoid or correct faults of the will: such as obstinacy, fickleness, &c.

CONSIDERATION XI.

TIME.

I. *The nature of time.*

1. Time is the measure of distance of successive changes or events.
2. The time we are concerned with is the interval between our birth, the present moment, and death.
3. Time slips continually on, there is no pause, no stop.
4. Time past cannot be recalled; it is irrevocably past.
5. Time is given to us to gain merit and to work for eternity.
6. Every moment of time is, therefore, of eternal importance.

II. *The use of time.*

1. The first care ought to be not to lose time altogether.
2. That time is completely lost for eternity which is spent in mortal sin.
3. That time is lost which is spent in a sinful way, *v.g.*, in gossip, vanity, &c.
4. If we are in the state of sanctifying grace all time is gain which is not spent in a sinful manner.
5. We ought to make positively good use of time to improve, to work, to do what is

useful. We should not let time slip by unused.

6. We ought to make good use of leisure hours and spare moments.
7. We ought to watch and to make use of opportunities for virtue, zeal, charity, for doing what is useful to religion, &c.
8. We may increase our merits by a good intention, the motive of love, the morning oblation, &c.
9. It is wise to put our merits of satisfaction and petition to the greatest advantage.

III. *Wise economy of time.*

1. A wise plan of work, so as not to lose time by hesitation, by doubts as to what to do first, &c.
2. Wisdom of making it a rule to do first what is necessary, then what is hard and unpleasant, then what is useful, pleasant, &c.
3. Economy of strength, by wise use of recreation, by moderation, &c.
4. Care in not overdoing anything, *v.g.*, mortification or work, so as to reserve some elasticity for work and some strength for unforeseen demands on us.
5. The discretion which looks upon work as a most important means and practice of holiness and of devotedness to our Lord and His interests.
6. The use and abuse of little hobbies.
7. The avoidance of all anxiety and nervous unrest; earnestness of purpose; habits of tact, prudence, and common sense.

CONSIDERATION XII.

WORK.

I. *The necessity and importance of work.*

1. In consequence of the fall of Adam, man is condemned to "labour and toil." (Genesis iii. 17.)
2. All have to work; the poor by necessity; the rich are miserable, unless they take an interest in some useful work and pursuit.
3. It is impossible for a man to distinguish himself, to do something great or something really useful, without hard work.
4. Even the early hermits worked in the desert; the monks in the middle ages worked, and now we reap the benefits in culture and literature.
5. Sanctity consists in devotedness to the Person and the interests of our Lord; the work done by men of every class of life is most closely bound up with His interests.
6. Work that we do, either from duty, charity, or zeal, is in the direct line of holiness.
7. Even ordinary duties of life, business, and employment cannot be neglected without manifold injury to the interests of Christ.

8. Careful attention to one's ordinary daily work in one's business, profession, or employment is itself, in various ways, conducive to the honour of God and of religion.
9. Most people have opportunities of doing works of charity or zeal, besides their ordinary duties of life. What opportunities have I?
10. It is of the utmost importance and of the greatest advantage to the cause of religion that those who are able should use such opportunities. In what works of charity and zeal do I take an active part?

II. *Motives from which we should work.*

1. Never undertake to do anything from a sinful motive.
2. Try not to undertake to do anything expressly from a purely natural and selfish motive.
3. Encourage yourself to undertake works of duty, charity, and zeal through motives of hope, gratitude, love, and by the consideration of their usefulness and of the example of Christ.
4. Make occasionally a deliberate intention to work for the love of God, especially when natural and selfish considerations obtrude themselves.
5. Study to work in the spirit of duty and of devotedness to the Person and the interests of our Lord.

III. *Various considerations.*

1. What work is incumbent on us individually?
2. How to do our work well; in the best possible way; with a view to the best result.
3. We must never be discouraged by difficulties, weariness, or failure.
4. Avoid shirking work from selfishness, pride, love of ease, or the influence of narrow-minded and erroneous ascetical principles.
5. We should be willing to do work for others or to help others, when we can be of service to them.
6. Tact is needed lest we give annoyance to others by being too meddlesome or too officious.
7. Endeavour to do every work of duty, of charity, of zeal, with prudence, consideration for others, good sense, discretion, and with gentle manly feeling.
8. If wise, you will not be continually beginning new things without mature consideration, nor adhere so unreasonably to what has been the custom as to be blind to altered times and circumstances.
9. Be earnest in helping on works of charity and zeal rather by assisting in the drudgery part than by much talking and by occupying positions of precedence on committees.

CONSIDERATION XIII.

THE PRIESTHOOD.

I. *The power of a priest.*

1. *The oblation of the Sacrifice of Christ:* the power of consecration. The Blessed Sacrament is the greatest mystery in Heaven and on earth; the Blessed Trinity is a greater mystery for our comprehension, but it is all in keeping with our ideas of God: it is all sublime, infinite, divine. In the Holy Eucharist we have God in a state of humiliation, of sacrifice, almost of annihilation, and that without any prejudice to His dignity or His happiness. This mystery of Divine power, wisdom, love, zeal, and condescension is placed in the hands of the priest. Well may Cherubim and Seraphim look with awe, astonishment, and veneration on a priest! He is made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men! (1 Cor. iv. 9.) At his word, the substance of bread and wine vanish out of existence, the species, *i.e.*, the physical appearances of bread and wine alone remaining, and the Son of God, in all the fulness of His Godhead and of His Manhood, enshrines Himself

a victim and a prisoner of love in the consecrated Host, in the Chalice, in the tabernacle, and in the heart of men. Christ cannot offer this His Sacrifice without His priest; when the priest wills it, He must offer Himself through his hands.

2. *The dispensation of the mercy of Christ:* the power of absolution. "Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven." (St. John xx. 23.) A power is entrusted to the priest which never was given to an angel nor even to the Mother of God. This power reaches the inmost depths of the soul.

3. *The ministration of the grace of Christ.* The priests are dispensers of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1), and ought to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 St. Peter iv. 10.) The priest has the power to help the dying by Extreme Unction. He has the power of blessing.

II. *The mission of the priest.*

1. *In the sight of God.* He is appointed to do the work of Christ on earth: to carry on the work of His salvation. He is a visible and indispensable agent in the economy of the redemption. Christ's grace is not limited to the visible agency of His Church and priesthood, but to a great extent Christ, the Son of God, depends on the priest for the success of His redemption; He depends on the priest in the dispen-

sation of His sacraments, of His visible and infallible means of grace; He depends on the priest in the preaching of His doctrine and His Name; He depends on the priest, to a great extent, in the salvation of His souls: of souls which He bought by His Blood.

2. *In sight of the Church.* The priest is her representative at the altar of sacrifice—the visible link of mediation between her members, the souls of men, and her Head—Christ the Redeemer. He dispenses her blessings, guides the souls entrusted to her.
3. *In sight of Hell.* The priest has power over the powers of evil: the power of the sacraments, of exorcism, of blessing.

III. *The confidence of the priest.*

1. The priest cannot look for confidence in himself.
2. His confidence is in God; if God gives a call, He gives grace to follow it.
3. What draws great blessings on a priest and on his work is holiness, or at least the study and desire of holiness; humility; zeal which only seeks the interests of Christ and of souls; hard work; fidelity to our daily devotions; devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Virgin; patience and forbearance, tact and prudence, that charity and kindness to all, which prompts him to strive to become all things to all men. (1 Cor. ix. 22.)

CONSIDERATION XIV.

THE LIFE OF A PRIEST.

I. *The priest in the church.*

1. *At the altar.* The spirit of reverence; care to give edification. Watchfulness lest one be too slow, or too hurried, or careless in observance of the rubrics or pronunciation of the words.
2. *In the pulpit.* Care in having prepared the matter beforehand; in giving real instruction, in avoiding offence to non-Catholics; in seeking to be natural, in not allowing oneself to be too long.
3. *In the confessional.* Prudence to distinguish between what is of duty and what is advisable, or matter of perfection: patience to listen; kindness. Charity not to repel people from the sacraments by severity, but to deal with them in the spirit of Him Who rescued the woman taken in adultery (St. John viii. 3—11), reproved the Pharisees for their severity (St. Matt. xxiii. 4, St. Luke xi. 46), and Who will not break the bruised reed. (St. Matt. xii. 20.)

II. *The priest at home.*

1. *Devotion and recollection.* The practice of giving full time to one's prayers; of saying the Breviary at a befitting hour.

2. *Work and study.* Daily habit to keep one's books in order; to persevere in study.
3. *Attention to health and cheerfulness.* Food wholesome and sufficient; drink in moderation; care in accommodating ourselves to the priests we live with; willingness to oblige them; cheerfulness, tact, prudence, patience, and kindness when called to the parlour, &c.

III. *The priest among his people.*

1. *Duty and charity.* Resolution to do first what is necessary, *e.g.*, work, sick-calls. Kindness to the sick and dying; prudence not to delay the last sacraments; zeal in looking well after work entrusted to us: schools, guilds, collections, &c. It is wise first to do what is necessary, then what is hardest, then what is pleasant.
2. *Discretion and tact.* Prudence not to work in opposition to Superiors or fellow-priests; not to identify ourselves with parties; to be reserved about politics; careful not to give unnecessary offence; attentive to local needs and circumstances.
3. *Zeal and judgment.* Wisdom not to be too hasty about making changes; mature consideration before we begin anything new. Interest in science, and unsectarian charity, personal acquaintance with non-Catholics. Amusements for the people.

CONSIDERATION XV.

FRUITS OF SACERDOTAL ZEAL.

I. *Prevention and destruction of sin.*

1. The priest forgives sins; sin is an eyesore to God; the priest blots it out of existence.
2. Once blotted out from existence, it is blotted out for ever.
3. Also its eternal punishment is remitted, and remitted for ever! even if the soul were eventually lost, it would not be punished for sins forgiven, would suffer less, would curse and hate God less in eternity, and be a monument of His mercy even in Hell.
4. The priest has power to prevent sin, by the administration of sacramental grace and by personal prudence and zeal.

II. *The salvation of souls.*

1. A soul saved will be happy and grateful for ever.
2. A soul saved is an eternal monument of God's mercy and redemption.
3. The soul saved will love and praise God for eternity.
4. Saving a soul is a service to Christ, who shed His Blood for it.
5. The eternal salvation of many a soul may depend on the priest.

III. *The sanctification of souls.*

1. The greater the holiness and merits of a soul are:
   a. the greater will be its happiness and glory in Heaven;
   b. the more will God be glorified by the soul in eternity; for it will be a more perfect monument of His grace and mercy; it will love and praise God more, and the more perfect will be the living image and reflection of God in the soul;
   c. the greater will be the joy which all saints and angels will derive in eternity from the sight and the company of that soul, and from their union with it.
2. A zealous priest has it in his power to lead many souls to high perfection.

CONSIDERATION XVI.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I. *Mass.*

1. Our Lord each day offers Himself wholly to His Heavenly Father.
2. He has placed this oblation in our hands, in the hands of the Church, and He offers Himself through the hands of the priest.
3. The priest really offers the Sacrifice, but with Christ; Christ is the chief offerer.
4. Our Lord offers Himself through our hands as completely as He offered Himself on the Cross—He offers Himself for us and out of love to us.
5. He offers Himself continually; as dawn advances, so the Divine meridian of the Sacrifice of Love advances from east to west; the whole globe is an altar of sacrifice, aglow with His love.

II. *Holy Communion.*

1. Our Lord also gives Himself entirely to us.
2. He gives Himself out of love, and from a desire to dwell with us in a living union of love.
3. Nothing is more our own than the food we eat, the drink we take. Our Lord belongs

to us in a similar way: He not only enters into and nourishes our body as food and drink do—He also enters our very inmost souls, to nourish them to eternal life.

4. Our Lord remains united with us by a special mystical union of grace and love and transformation, so that He may live in us and we in Him. (St. John vi. 57.)
5. He desires and longs to be often united with us in Holy Communion.

III. *Perpetual presence.*

1. Our Lord, moreover, continually abides near us, among us, a perpetual victim and prisoner of love.
2. He invites us to go to Him for help and comfort in all troubles: "Come to Me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. xi. 28.)
3. He is anxious to receive our love and confidence.
4. If we truly knew and loved Him, should we not often visit Him? should we not like to be near Him? should we not place full confidence in Him?

CONSIDERATION XVII.

THE IDEA OF APOSTOLIC SANCTITY.

I. *Devotedness to the Person and the interests of Jesus Christ.*

1. The inmost essence of sanctity is the love of God.
2. God especially sought our love in the Incarnation of the Son.
3. The Person of the Son of God made Man is the object of our love especially suited to our nature and brought near to us.
4. Love is not, or ought not to be, a mere sentiment, a mere barren feeling of affection; but a union and exchange of goods, ideas, interests.
5. The real essence of love is to be sought in the acts and in the conscious, determined disposition of the will.
6. Love will lead us to embrace the will and the interests of Christ.
7. What are the interests Christ has at heart? God's glory—the salvation and sanctification of souls.
8. True love of Christ will not be indifferent to these interests.

II. *Earnestness.*

1. The more earnest and thorough we are in our devotedness to Christ and His interests, the greater is our holiness.
2. There are different kinds and degrees of devotedness, *e.g.*, Mr. Edison is devoted to science; so is a professor who is paid £120 to teach chemistry and natural science, and is expected to prepare pupils for examination. A workhouse surgeon who gets £90—£130, and detests his work, and M. Pasteur are both devoted to medicine. A clerk who rushes from his desk at the stroke of six, or a shopman who yawns for the closing hour, are engaged in the business as well as the owner or chief partner, who spends nights in study to push it. But how different in each case is the degree of their devotedness.
3. So a priest who only does what he must is devoted in a way to the interests of Christ, but with how different a devotedness from that of St. Paul, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis of Sales, &c.

III. *Disinterestedness.*

1. An officer or a gentleman in the civil or diplomatic service may be thoroughly loyal, but, perhaps, from interested *motives*—pay, honour, influence, &c., or by interested *means*, he may scheme to get promotion, &c., that he may serve his own interests as

much as possible, and look to his own ease, comfort, enjoyment, promotion.

2. So we may look to our own advantage: natural ease, honour, &c., or even to *spiritual* rewards; or, on the other hand, may seek simply the interests of Christ.
3. God wishes that we should be happy in His service; He provides enjoyable means of life and action. Hence we may (*a*) grow attached to what is pleasant to us, such as food, drink, comforts, &c., or (*b*) shrink from what is disagreeable to nature.
4. *Not all enjoyment* is contrary to or inconsistent with the most absolute sanctity and devotedness, which consists *in looking to the end in all things*, and regarding and using *all the rest* as means.

CONSIDERATION XVIII.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

I. *A witness.*

1. The Guardian Angel is constantly at our side; and sees us.
2. He sees all our sins, all our faults; our evil motives, our evil desires, affections, &c. We are never alone.
3. He sees all the good we do, however hidden it may be.
4. He sees all our inward struggles, aspirations, acts of virtue and self-denial, and he marks them, as it were, in the book of life.

II. *A helper.*

1. The Angel Guardian is set to protect us from danger.
2. He is at our side to watch over us and to warn us.
3. He is at our side to encourage us and to lead us to virtue.
4. He helps us in temporal and spiritual matters.
5. He has the wisdom to know what is best for us, and he wishes it.

III. *A loving friend.*

1. The Angel Guardian is at our side as our constant companion.

2. He loves us—he knows the value of our souls and the eternal importance of our lives.
3. He looks upon helping us as a duty of love to God.
4. We ought to be grateful to God for our Guardian Angel.
5. We ought to be grateful to our Guardian Angel, and cherish great devotion, love, and confidence towards him.

CONSIDERATION XIX.

THREE DEGREES OF APOSTOLIC SANCTITY.

Degree I. Ordinary sanctity. This degree is attained by those who strive:

1. To do what is necessary (as Christians, as priests, as Religious), *i.e.*, to keep the Commandments of God, and of the Church (the vows, &c.). Doing what one is obliged to do under sin, mortal or venial.
2. To avoid grosser faults, especially faults which would be noticed, or resented, or would disedify.
3. To do what is commonly done, *e.g.*, *by Christians:* giving something at offertories, collections, &c.; undertaking some work of charity, zeal, devotion; *by priests:* saying Mass daily; making a short meditation; and doing what priests commonly do; *by Religious:* performing some penances; being ready to do what Superiors ask, even without a positive command; being ready to oblige others; and to carry out works of charity or zeal commonly but not necessarily performed.
4. To do special works of devotion, charity, or zeal, which are not commonly done, but

which are in keeping with one's tastes, inclinations, or interests.

5. To act from ordinary motives of hope and ordinary love, *e.g.*, by making a good intention, the morning oblation, &c.

Degree II. Apostolic devotedness. This degree is attained by those who make unselfish and unreserved devotedness to the person and the interests of Christ their study, and who endeavour:

1. To espouse the interests of Christ, identifying themselves with them, looking, not to themselves, but to that which pleases Christ, and is most conducive to the welfare of religion and of souls.
2. To make it a rule to do what is most conducive to the honour of religion and the welfare of souls, whether it be hard or easy, pleasant or unpleasant.
3. To act mainly from the purest motive of love.

Degree III. Devotedness of perfect love. This degree is attained by those who try to make it a rule:

1. Not only to live and act in the spirit of the second degree;
2. But also to choose what is humble, &c., from personal love and imitation of our Lord, when the interests of Christ, of religion, and of souls are equally promoted.

CONSIDERATION XX.

THREE CLASSES WHO AIM AT PERFECTION.

Class I. The undefiled in the way. This class comprises those who make negative perfection their study and aim at purity of heart.

1. They try to avoid sins and faults and imperfections.
2. They often make the essence of holiness to consist in committing no sins and avoiding all faults.
3. They advert little to the practice of positive virtue, except in so far as they can construe the omission of such a practice into a fault.
4. The result of this view of sanctity is not seldom that a person fails to reach a high degree; fails to do much good that easily might be done, is liable to scruples and mental worry; and remains centred in himself.

Class II. Ascetical perfection. (*Limited liability saints.*) This class comprises those persons

1. Who mistake the means of sanctity for the essence of sanctity.
2. Who therefore do not look upon prayer, Holy Communion, rules, mortifications, &c., as means of sanctity, but think, or at least

act, as if sanctity consisted in the observance of one, or some, or all of these things.

3. Who will, consequently, often refuse to do apostolic work, which, under circumstances could or even ought to be done, when it would entail an exception to some rule, a sacrifice of some devotion, or a departure from some custom, or even from some view, or habit of their own.
4. Such persons are liable to read (and even to write) Lives of Saints in a very misleading spirit.
5. They are sure of salvation and even of a high degree of sanctity, but they are liable to be narrow-minded, and to prevent a great deal of good being done that could and ought to be done. Men like these are not seldom to a very serious extent responsible for the falling away of people from the practice of, and belief in, religion, because they fail to do, and they prevent others from doing, what was not done before, but now becomes necessary in order to meet needs and dangers brought on by change of circumstances.

Class III. *Apostolic perfection.* This degree comprises such persons as

1. Study simply to be devoted to the person and the interests of Christ.
2. Practise, in consequence, absolute, unreserved, and perfect self-denial, not looking in anything to themselves.

CONSIDERATION XXI.

ECONOMY OF DAILY MERIT.

I. *How can we keep ourselves as free as possible from sin?*

1. Heaven is ours, if we die in the state of grace; it ought, therefore, to be our endeavour to keep our souls as free as possible from great sins.
2. It should also be our study to keep our souls as free as possible from the guilt of venial sin.
3. The surest means to do both, is frequentation of the sacraments at stated times.
4. It is also advisable to make a short act of perfect contrition every night.
5. Such an act of contrition, made by a person who frequently receives the holy sacraments, restores him to the state of sanctifying grace, in case he should have had the misfortune to commit a mortal sin; and it obtains for him, from God's mercy, the forgiveness also of venial sins, even independently of the sacraments.
6. This practice obtains for him, moreover, countless graces, which may help him to avoid sin.

7. The consequence is, that he will spend his life habitually in the state of sanctifying grace, and comparatively free even from venial guilt, a state of soul which enables him to gain very great merit.
8. It is advisable to pay attention chiefly to *the correction of some fault* or *the practice of some virtue.*

II. *How can we, with the greatest ease, ensure the richest possible merits for Heaven?*

1. The soul being in the state of grace, all our thoughts, words, and actions, become meritorious, more especially if we have a good intention. But they must not be vitiated either in themselves, or by our having a bad object in view, or by reason of any other circumstance.
2. If we get into Heaven at all, all these merits will have their reward, though we might have had the misfortune to fall for a time into deadly sin.
3. The merits of what we do are enhanced in proportion to the sacrifices entailed and in proportion to the love with which we do it.
4. Hence all our merits are vastly increased by making a good intention every morning.
5. This good intention might, most usefully, comprise: (*a*) the motive of the love of God and union with the merits of our Lord; (*b*) an intention to gain all the indulgences we can, offering part or all for the suffering

souls; (*c*) the morning oblation of the Apostleship of Prayer to the Sacred Heart.

III. *How are our interests and the interests of our Lord served by this morning oblation?*

1. It brings us into constant, actual union with God, by making His interests ours, and by making our lives one unbroken prayer.
2. It sets the seal of love, and, therefore, of personal merit on all we do.
3. It increases in us the power of merit, through the increase of sanctifying grace and of the spirit of love.
4. It enables our Lord to bestow countless graces on innumerable souls, and so serves to promote the interests which He has at heart: viz., the spread and welfare of His Church, and the salvation and sanctification of souls.

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